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ABSTRACT

The child development programs of the Pomona Unified School District in California are described. The district's program provides child care and development services to about 1,050 children at 16 locations. Some child care services for children from 6 weeks to 14 years of age are offered from 6 a.m. until midnight, and until 6 p.m. on weekends, 7 days a week throughout the year. General background information is followed by descriptive materials on programming and curriculum, administration and staffing, and funding. Brief profiles of Head Start and State Preschool programs, the School Age Parenting and Infant Development Program, Center-Based Preschool and School Age Programs, the Care of Mildly Ill Children Program, School Age Community Care/Latchkey Services, the Child Care Food Program, the Resource and Referral Agency, the Gain Program for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) recipients participating in job training, the Child Protective Care/Respite Care Program for families under high stress, and the Alternative Payment Plan. Brief descriptions of centers in the Child Development Program are also included. (RH)

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A DESCRIPTION

OF THE

CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

OF THE

POMONA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

POMONA, CALIFORNIA

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CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The Pomona Unified School District covers an area of 23 square miles. It includes the city of Pomona and the community of North Diamond Bar, located in Los Angeles County, 25 miles due east of metropolitan Los Angeles. The district is a mix of urban and suburban communities containing approximately 150,000 residents of primarily low to middle incomes, with a smaller number of upper-middle-income families. The population of the District is approximately 54% Hispanic, 20% Black, 19% White and 8% Asian and other groups.

The Child Development Program of the district is committed to provide high quality child care/development services. This includes a safe and secure environment for children and staff, staff educated in child development and trained through on-going staff in-service programs, a variety of services to strengthen and support families, and curriculum derived from principles of child development to promote and enhance the care and learning of all participating children.

The Child Development Program of the district provides child care and development services to approximately 1050 children at 16 locations. The district operates Head Start and State Preschool, and both subsidized and non-subsidized child care which includes infant-toddler care, care for abused children, week-end, evening and holiday care, and care for mildly ill children. From 6 a.m. until midnight (weekends to 6 p.m.), seven days a week all year round, for children age 6 weeks to 14 years, Pomona offers some child care services. Some of these services use private child care providers. Parents are also served through these programs in a variety of ways. Every effort is made by the administration of this program to integrate the various services available in order to maximize the benefits to children and families. The specific programs and sites are described below.

Because the Pomona Child Development Programs is unique in finding ways to offer a wide variety of comprehensive services to large numbers of children and parents with many different needs, by carefully integrating funding and resources, the program has been recognized nation wide as a model to be considered for developing programs. Several studies have included this program in their descriptions and national news and television networks have published features and videos relating to the need for child care and services. References to these are included.

As well as continuing with the network of child development programs that are currently functioning well in the district, the administration and staff looks forward to further development and expansion to keep up with the burgeoning needs of children and families; to help to prevent problems, and to intervene to halt deterioration in families and to assist families to recover from difficulties through child care and related services. One goal is to develop ways to provide services for more families within the present framework. Another is to expand the Head Start Program as more funds become available. Exploration has already begun to discover ways to develop programs for the middle school level. Further concerns center around relating to employer child care and finding ways to service more families who are able to pay for child care at the prevailing private rates.

PROGRAMMING/CURRICULUM

Program components as defined by the State are met by the various services within the Child Development Program. No curriculum model is mandated by the State Department of Education. Most of the classrooms are moving toward full implementation of the High/Scope Curriculum Model, using the room arrangement and key experiences as outlined for infants and toddlers, preschool and school age children by the Educational Research Foundation. This curriculum is child centered with children taking an active role in planning and decision making. The teacher role is one of assistance to children rather than direction of children. There are four High/Scope endorsed Trainers of Teachers working in the program. The school age children are in enriched but non-academic environments that provide opportunities both for self-selected activities and academic homework.

ADMINISTRATION/STAFFING

Administration for the Child Development Programs is housed in three highly compact, fully occupied offices; the main one in a cottage, the others in a church and a portable building. Each office has space and equipment for children to use while their parents are being interviewed. All available space is utilized to the maximum.

Three administrators are responsible for all programs. There is also a Resource and Referral Staff. There is a headteacher or center director at each site. Teachers and aides are determined by ratio requirements. The following ratios obtain: Infants, 0 to 18 months; 1 adult to 3 children, 18 months to 3 years; 1 adult to 4 children, Preschool; 1 adult to 8 and School-age; 1 adult to 14.

Supportive services in the areas of health, nutrition, social, psychological and other services are provided by one full time nurse (R.N.), two part time nurses (R.N.), and two health services assistants.There are two part time licensed child psychologists. There are two community liaison persons. Personnel with bilingual skills are available in the three administrative offices to assist parents to bridge the language gap. Additional staff include 1 secretary, 1 records clerk, 8 clerk typists, 1 accounting clerk, and 2 fulltime custodians and 1 part time custodian. There are approximately 135 employees.

FUNDING

The total budget is approximately 3.5 million dollars. Funding for the Child Development Programs is received from 12 different sources. All centers except Diamond Point and Armstrong School Age Centers are subsidized by the State; most of the cost is borne by the State, with parents paying a fraction of the cost as determined by a sliding scale.

Funds are allocated by the State on an annual basis through contracts with the district which specify the maximum reimbursible amount of the contract, the number of days of service expected to be provided and the number of child days of enrollment that must be generated in order to earn the contract. The system differs from K through 12 in that funding is based on enrollment rather than attendance. The concept is that child care costs continue even if some of the children are not present. There is an attendance factor applied in final earnings calculations with 95% attendance resulting in 100% of the contract being earned. The 95% includes excused absences which are defined liberally. The reimbursement system is rather complex and is being looked at for the purpose of simplification which would result in reduced record keeping costs.

Parents are admitted to the subsidized programs through a prioritized waiting list that stays in the 1200-1500 range. In order to use the programs, parents must be either working or in training, or be incapacitated, or seeking employment. Children are also admitted through referrals that identify children as at risk of being abused or neglected.

Diamond Point and Armstrong School Age Centers are primarily supported by fees charged to parents which are comparable to rates charged by the private sector. Some children are subsidized by the State, with parents paying fees on a sliding scale mandated by the State.

Head Start/State Preschool are comprehensive, part day child development programs for preschool children. There are eight program components in this program. These components are: Education, Health, Social Services, Mental Health, Handicapped Services, Nutrition, Parent Involvement and Administration. Parent participation in the classroom is an especially important part of the Headstart model and parents also participate in monthly parent meetings. There are 11 classrooms, funded with Federal and State dollars through the L.A. County Superintendent of Schools. Admission is based on criteria established by the Federal Government and the State Department of Education. These programs serve 190 children.

State Preschool Program is planned to strengthen and support families and to promote and enhance the developmental and learning opportunities for all participating children of prekindergarten age. There is a strong emphasis on parent education. Many parents from this program follow their children on into elementary school, becoming PTA officers and school district employees. Eligibility is for low income families. Funding is provided by the State Department of Education, Office of Child Development. This program serves 75 children.

The School Age Parenting and Infant Development Program (SAPID) provides child care/ development services to 20 infants and toddlers of school age parents who are completing their high school education. The basic purpose of this program is to prevent teen agers who have children from dropping out of high school. This program also provides funds to teach parenting skills to both parents and non-parents. The Park West Infant/Toddler Center is described in more detail below.

Center Based Preschool and School Age Programs provide year round child care/development services to the infants, toddlers, preschool and school-age children of parents who are working or in training. These services are offered during the day, the evenings and on weekends. Families are eligible for this subsidized child care program based on their income; they pay fees on a sliding scale. 250 children under school age and 200 school age children are served. The centers are described separately below.

Care of Mildly Ill Children is a part of the Center Based Program. Mildly ill children who are non-contagious, but are not well enough to be in their regular center program are served at a special center, called Health House. This center is described more fully under Children's Centers.

School Age Community Care/Latch Key Services is a program for "latch-key" and other school-age children. Fees are on a sliding scale to eligible families and are full cost to others. There are approximately 145 children served at two locations; Armstrong and Diamond Point. These are described below.

The Child Care Food Program provides breakfast, lunch, supper and meal supplements, up to 2 meals and 1 snack a day per child, to all children enrolled in the Child Development Programs. There is no separate charge for this service. The funding is from the Office of Child Nutrition and Food Distribution.

Resource and Referral Agency is part of a network of approximately 65 agencies throughout the State. It provides child care information and assistance throughout a wide geographical area including 2 counties. There are approximately 1.5 million people in its service area. It assists parents to find child care and assists providers to improve the child care supply and quality through constant contact by phone, newletters and workshops among other methods. It gives technical assistance and training to new and existing providers. In a given year, approximately 8,000 to 10,000 calls are processed. The agency is funded by the State Department of Education.

The Gain Program pays for child care in district-operated centers and in private, licensed child care homes and centers for AFDC recipients who are participating in job training. The Resource and Referral Office provides referrals to child care for about 550 Gain participants in areas of 2 counties. State monies provide this contract.

Child Protective Care/Respite Care provides limited term care to families of any income who are under high stress. This is provided through a system of sub-contracts with private, licensed group centers and licensed family day care homes. Up to 27 children can be served on a variable basis. This includes child care for children of some homeless families who are served by the Pomona Council of Churches in a homeless shelter. One goal is to include these children in the regular programs as they become eligible.

Alternative Payment:Infants/Toddlers/ Preschoolers/School Age Latch Key Programs provide continuing child care/development services to eligible families on a sliding fee basis, ranging from 0 to full cost. These services are provided through a network of licensed family day care homes, licensed group centers and YMCA's which sub-contract with the District. About 110 children are served with these State Department of Education funds.

DESCRIPTION OF CHILDREN'S CENTERS

The following descriptions of children's centers within the Pomona Child Development Program were written from dialogs with head teachers of the centers in which they described their view of the characteristics of their center.

Allison Center

The Allison Center is located on the campus of Allison Elementary School and serves approximately 70 children, Kindergarten through 5th Grade. The center is open from 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday - Friday, year round. One of the outstanding features of this center is the involvement of parents in such activities as painting and repair of the center and in fund raising activities.

Armstrong Center

The Armstrong Center is located at Neil Armstrong Elementary School in Diamond Bar and serves 35 school-age children. It is open from 6:30 to 8:30 a.m. and from 11:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday - Friday. A strength of this center is its staff involvement with the parents and the respect the children have for the staff. The philosophy of Armstrong is to provide a combination of modern home atmosphere and one-room school type setting. Self-discipline, learning, responsibility and creative fun are emphasized.

Arroyo Center

The Arroyo Center is located on the campus of the Arroyo Elementrary School and serves approximately 40 children, Kindergarten through 8th Grade. The center is open from 7:00 to 8:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday - Friday, year round. It provides a much needed service in this part of town. Arroyo Center and a Head Start Class share the same facility and cooperate in the use of a wide variety of equipment, materials and space to foster learning. The center staff coordinates with the public school teachers in communicating and working with parents and children. Staff is involved individually with the children, allowing them to make choices of activities and responding to homework needs. Arroyo runs all summer; a highlight of the summer is the reading program.

Barfield Center

The Barfield Center is located on the campus of the Barfield Elementary School and serves approximately 30 children, Kindergarten through 6th Grade. The center is open from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday - Friday, year round. This center provides a vital service to this part of the city. The staff works toward developing independence and responsibility in children through High/Scope Curriculum principles. There is coordination with the regular school program through the mutual use of space and materials with the Elementary School Resource Teacher.

Diamond Point Center

Diamond Point is located in three adjacent district classrooms at Diamond Point Elementary School. Approximately 110 school age children from Kindergarten through 6th Grade receive services in a program that operates from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday - Friday, year round. Outstanding features are its home-like environment and the variety of activities from which the children may choose, using the High/Scope Curriculum format. Much diversity of approach is used to meet the needs of the wide age range of children. The staff has developed comprehensive forms to help children, parents and staff understand the program opportunities.

Emerson Center

The Emerson Center is located on the campus of the Emerson Junior High School and serves approximately 80 children, ages 3 years through 13 years. The center is open from 6:30 a.m. to 12 midnight, Monday - Friday, year round. These extended hours are unique to this progam. The night program feature began in 1972 at another location and has been running continuously since that time. This center coordinates 3 programs: children's center for pre-schoolers, after school and evening care in one facility. There is a flow of children throughout the day which requires the staff to mesh plans and spaces very carefully.

Health House

Health House is located on the campus of Emerson Junior High School and serves approximately 12 children who are mildly ill, but non-contagious. The age range is from 2 years through 13 years. It is open Monday - Friday, year round. This program began in 1980 and was one of the first of its kind in the nation. A retrospective research article was written about the Health House experience and was published in the American Journal of Diseases of Children in June, 1988. Health House adapts its setting to meet the needs of individual children, following medical instructions and helping each child to recuperate until ready to return to his/her regular center.

Park West Infant/Toddler Center

Park West is located on the campus of the Park West Alternative High School and serves approximately 50 children ages 6 weeks through 3 years. The center is open from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily, Monday - Friday, year round. This center is located in two buildings - one provided by the State and the other by the school district's Career and Continuing Education Department. This infant center has its origin in 1972. It was one of the first infant centers funded by the State. Its primary purpose has remained the same - to serve the infants and toddlers of the school-age parent. The youngest parent is 12 years of age. The 16 year old parents sometimes have 2 children. The staff works with the teen age parents and their families to develop rapport and to share knowlege about children and their characteristics and growth patterns. Since the parents are so young, the staff is often working with 2 sets of children. This type of children's center allows teen age parents to graduate from high school. Great care is taken by the staff of this center to control infectious diseases through maintaining sanitary conditions. As infants and toddlers from this center become preschoolers they can move on into centers for older children within the district.

Madison Center/Madison Weekend Center

The Madison Center is located on child development property adjacent to the Madison Elementary School and serves over 100 children ages 30 months through 13 years. The center is open from 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily, 7 days a week, year round. Special features of this center are its strong bilingual emphasis, its services to ESL students and its age span. The center staff works closely with the elementary school staff because both groups have mutual concerns regarding the children. The weekend feature began in 1977, ceased for about 2 years and was resumed in 1982. The center staff works closely with the elementary school staff because both groups have mutual concerns regarding the children. The weekend program has different numbers of children each day. It is a multi-age group from 2½ years to 14 years. The program centers around child selection of recreational activities. Older children take walks, go to the library and accept responsibility for such things as making snacks and planting trees.

Orange Grove Center

Orange Grove is located in a leased church facility, the Pomona Church of the Brethren. The center serves 40 children from 30 months to 5 years and is open from 6:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday - Friday. This center was studied by Bank Street College and is included in Bank Street publications describing the 13 national model public school programs. An outstanding feature of this center is the exceptional harmony among the staff members.

Pasadena Street Center

Pasadena Street Center is located in a leased church facility, the Trinity United Methodist Church in central Pomona. The center serves children from the age of 18 months to age 5 years and is open from 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday - Friday, The uniqueness of this center lies in the special programs it conducts for families and in the parents' contributions to the center program.

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This description of the Child Development Center Programs of the Pomona Unified School District was compiled by Katie Gerecke, under the supervision of Bill Ewing, Administrator of Child Development Programs, Pomona Unified School District. It is part of Katie's 1989-90 Sabbatical Project. She is a member of the Early Child Development Faculty of Mt. San Antonio College, Walnut, CA.

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